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**REMARKS BY  
AMBASSADOR JAMES F. MORIARTY**

**AT THE INAUGURATION OF  
ANTI-CORRUPTION WEEK 2009**

**DHAKA, MARCH 18 --** Following is the text of remarks of Ambassador James F. Moriarty at the inauguration of Anti-Corruption Week 2009 on Wednesday, March 18.

(begin text)

Honorable Speaker of Parliament Advocate Abdul Hamid; Comptroller and Auditor General of Bangladesh, Ahmed Ataul Hakeem; Honorable Members of the 9<sup>th</sup> Jatiya Shangshad; Distinguished Guests; Ladies and Gentlemen:

Assalam-u-Alaikum and good morning. Before I turn to the main portion of my speech, may I ask that you join me for a moment of silence as we remember those who lost their lives during the BDR mutiny last month.

Thank you for joining us today for the inauguration of *Anti-Corruption Week 2009*. Your presence demonstrates your commitment to promoting transparency and accountability in Bangladesh. And for that, I congratulate you.

The United States has supported Bangladesh since its independence - five billion dollars of assistance over the past 38 years. This assistance has supported economic, social and political development. We also work closely with Bangladesh to promote trade and investment. And finally, we work together to counter threats from extremists who seek to harm our societies and disrupt our way of life.

Bangladesh has made progress in improving its democratic institutions. Anti-Corruption Week is a good opportunity to highlight that progress. Bangladesh can be very proud of the fact that more than 80% of eligible voters participated in December's

parliamentary elections, an outstanding feat in any democracy. Voters elected candidates from eight political parties to the 9<sup>th</sup> Jatiya Shangshad.

Anti-corruption efforts are a key component of any government's responsibility. We fully support Bangladesh's efforts to combat corruption. Corruption has too long robbed Bangladeshis of the fruits of their labor.

The government has a responsibility to combat corruption using institutions to effectively monitor, investigate, and report corrupt activities. Bringing corrupt individuals to justice restores public confidence in those institutions and in the government as well as the nation.

Government efforts alone, however, are not enough. The fight against corruption requires the commitment and support of all sectors of society - government, civil society, business, the media, and an informed public. The theme of *Anti-Corruption Week 2009*, "Citizens and Government Working Together to Reduce Corruption in Bangladesh," underscores the need for this approach.

Bangladesh's vibrant media actively contributes to building public awareness on many issues, including corruption. Bangladeshi businessmen and women have added their voices to the fight against corruption and support a transparent and fair business environment.

Corruption is not unique to any one country or institution. Fighting corruption requires awareness and continual vigilance from all sectors of society. Nonetheless, the fight is worth the struggle. Corruption weakens democratic institutions – and ultimately harms most the weakest and most vulnerable members of society.

Corruption has an impact on economic growth. Corruption takes a bite out of the GDP. Some experts say that Bangladesh loses the equivalent of two percent of its GDP every year to corruption. That is almost two billion dollars every year that could be used on education, health, or infrastructure that the people of Bangladesh badly need.

Corruption also discourages business and foreign investment. I have had American investors tell me of scores of millions of dollars worth of projects in Bangladesh that they did not move forward on – because of corruption. What does that mean – tens of thousands of Bangladeshis who did not get jobs. What does that mean - tens of thousands

of families who went to bed a little bit hungrier, and scores of thousands of children who did not get a good education.

Bangladesh has made progress in raising awareness and combating corruption. Bangladesh's February 2007 ratification of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption demonstrates the government's commitment to promote good governance and meet international standards of transparency and accountability.

Bangladesh has an independent and well-functioning Election Commission. Last year, the EC oversaw the freest and fairest elections in Bangladesh's history. Bangladesh's independent Anti-Corruption Commission has a growing investigative capacity.

The United States Government is committed to fighting corruption. President Obama touched on corruption in his inauguration speech, noting that those "who cling to power through corruption and deceit...are on the wrong side of history." We are committed to helping Bangladesh rid itself of corruption.

A perfect example of that commitment is the "Promoting Governance Accountability Transparency and Integrity" project or PROGATI, funded by the U.S. Government through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The PROGATI project will improve transparency and accountability in public resource management by strengthening institutions that provide public sector oversight. Over the next four years, PROGATI will promote improved stewardship of public expenditures. It will work closely with the Bangladesh Jatiya Shangshad, the Office of the Comptroller and the Auditor General. It will encourage other important institutions, such as civil society and media, to have a voice.

To this end, the PROGATI project is now setting up a Budget Analysis and Monitoring Unit within the Parliament Secretariat. This unit will provide financial analysis to Members of Parliament, allowing them to better oversee national budgets and monitor government expenditures.

Furthermore, the U.S. Government is providing technical assistance to the Comptroller and Auditor General. This support will enhance the capacity of the country's supreme audit institution and increase transparency and accountability of government expenditures.

PROGRATI's second goal is to enhance the watchdog capabilities of civil society and the media.

The U.S. Government is partnering with the Institute of Governance Studies at BRAC University to establish a center that will train journalists on investigative reporting. The media has a critical role in freely and openly reporting on government abuses and corrupt acts.

Bangladesh continues to advance in its efforts to promote good governance and improve the stewardship of public resources. We are here to assist. I am pleased that the United States Government, through USAID, is sponsoring *Anti-Corruption Week*.

I thank the organizers for planning this event and thank you all for your participation and support.

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**GR/2009**